



The girls: Melisa & Irena

The date: June, 2010

The destination: Corsica, France

Our second trip this year is also taking us to a new destination: Corsica. This large French Mediterranean island is also known as the “mountain in the sea”, and for good reason: virtually the entire area of the island is marked by peaks, the highest of which towers up 2706 meters into the sky. Another characteristic of Corsica is the abundant supply of fresh water, making it exceptional in the Mediterranean region. You can see rivers and streams everywhere, ensuring a constant supply of water.

These rivers and streams are one of the main reasons why I decided to choose Corsica as the new destination for my projects. Two years ago, while I was on locations search here, I found a large number of wonderful places where the combination of light rocks, cool water and lush vegetation would form a very rewarding background for my models.

I decided that early June would be the best time for us to travel, because at that time of year we will most probably have a pleasant weather, while at the same time there won't be too many tourists at large on the island. However, actually getting to Corsica proves to be rather awkward: the only way we can all reach the place for a reasonable price is by spending the night in Paris on the way. Which means we will only have two and a half days on the island to do our work – rather less time than usual.

Melisa and Irena will be my models. Actually Nathalie was booked instead of Irena, but she had to cancel at the last moment because she has exams at the University this very week: she mixed up June and July and thought our trip was next month. Fortunately Irena was able to stand in for her. Marie will be the make-up artist and my assistant; she has performed these duties before, last year on our trip to the southern Alps.

Monday, June 7th, 2010: Day 1

9.00 p.m.: I am waiting for my girls at the airport in Paris; they are taking a direct flight from Prague. I arrived yesterday from my home town of Vienna and enjoyed a day's break here.

10.00 p.m.: After taking the train from the airport to our hotel in the city we decide to go out for dinner in the fashionable Latin Quarter of Paris. And tonight the lively, charming metropolis lives up to its reputation: it's warm enough to sit outside, and the countless cafes and restaurants with tables on the sidewalk seem full of cheerful people enjoying themselves. Unfortunately we don't have very much time to soak up the incom-

parable glamour of the city, since the last Metro back to our hotel leaves just after midnight.



We spend the first night together in the Latin Quarter of Paris.

11.00 a.m.: This morning we continue our journey, taking a flight from Paris to Bastia, the largest city in Corsica. The plan is for us to arrive in time to get in the first shooting session this afternoon. We say goodbye to Paris with a short train journey to the airport.



It's still only early afternoon when we get to Corsica.

2.00 p.m.: So far everything is going just fine: we arrive in Bastia punctually, and the weather couldn't be better: there isn't a cloud in the sky, and it's quite warm. We pick up the rental car and set off right away for our first destination, a mountain valley in the middle of the island.

3.30 p.m.: The drive doesn't take long. First we check in at the hotel; it's quite a simple place, but the setting is absolutely beautiful, right in the middle of the countryside. The location for our first shooting session is only a few kilometers away from here, so I ask Marie to make Melisa up in the hotel before we set off. Meanwhile I have a quick look round the location. There is a small river running through the valley, and at a number of places it forms extremely charming little pools and rapids. A little further on there is a small grove with very ancient trees. We'll definitely be able to make a good start with our work here today: there's nobody around, and we can be sure of two to three hours of good light before the sun vanishes behind the high mountains. However, in the meantime I decide I will only work with Melisa today, because I don't think there will be enough time to get any shots of Irena as well. I'll make up for this by having a session with her at this location tomorrow morning.

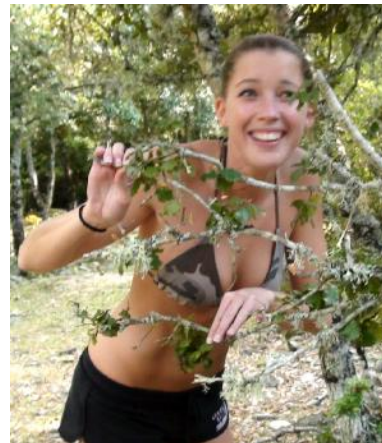


So there's plenty of time for a first shooting session!



The girls are delighted by the mountain valley.

5.00 p.m.: It is a little longer before we can finally set off. But this first shooting session really does go well: Melisa looks incredibly hot, playing with the cool water in the shadow of a massive rock! And there's plenty of time for a second session in the shadow of the ancient trees. The conditions are super, and so are the results – and the girls are in just as good a mood as I am.



We have lots of fun at the second location, too.

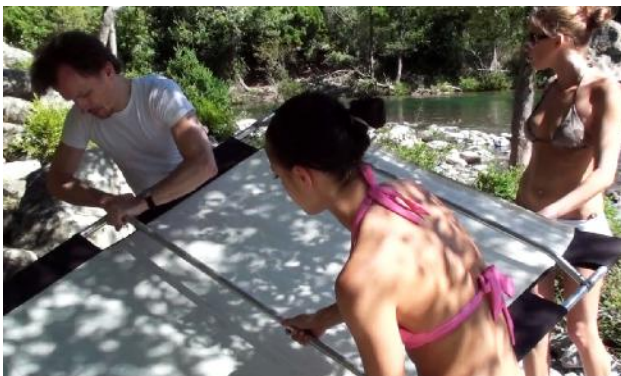


7.00 p.m.: It's time for dinner, and the terrace of our local hotel beckons. Although the hotel itself is relatively simple, the chef clearly has serious ambitions! By the light of the setting sun we devour a delicious meal with Corsican specialties and plenty of wine.

10.00 a.m.: The first thing we'll do this morning is get in a shooting session with Irena at the location we visited yesterday. And once again we're in luck; the valley is quite popular and usually attracts a lot of tourists, but we find ourselves completely alone and able to work undisturbed. Even the weather is on our side: plenty of sunshine and temperatures approaching 30° – ideal conditions, in fact! In no time at all we have finished one session in the cool water of the river and a second in the grove with the old trees.



This morning first we revisit the first location, this time with Irena.



12.00 p.m.: Soon afterwards we say goodbye to the Asco Valley, not without some regrets. I have another location planned for the rest of the day, a similar river valley a little further towards the heart of the island. On the way we stop briefly at a supermarket to stock up with groceries for a picnic lunch. We get told off in no uncertain terms when the girls march into the supermarket in their bikini tops – well, maybe next time they really should wear something on top!

1.30 p.m.: Getting to our next destination takes a fair bit of effort: first you drive along a very narrow winding road until you reach a remote village. It's such a tiny place that I have some difficulty finding a place to park the car. The next

stage is a footpath down into the valley which starts behind the village. We make our way along the stream at the bottom of the valley, and 25 minutes later we have reached the first beautiful spot.



Once we get to the next place we first have a picnic...



... before continuing with our work.



2.00 p.m.: We set up base camp on one of the huge blocks of stone scattered around the bottom of the stream. First we enjoy a little picnic with baguettes, cheese and ham, and then it's time for Marie to do Melisa's make-up. Meanwhile I look around a little and straight away discover a few lovely spots where we can begin work. I film Irena from an elevated position as she languishes in the middle of the stream, in the clear, green and shimmering water – a fantastic sight!

5.00 p.m.: A few hours later we finish our work here with some very arousing shots of Melisa against a white waterfall. A perfect day! Unfor-

tunately, though, we should think about moving on now, because we have to drive for a while to reach the hotel where we are staying tonight.

6.30 p.m.: First we have to make our way back to the main road that crosses the island, and later we turn on to a narrow, winding road with a spec-



The "Stairway of the Holy Queen" takes us to our hotel for the night.

tacular name "Scala die Santa Regina" – "Stairway of the Holy Queen" – which takes us up into the mountains. In the evening light this barren landscape has a very curious atmosphere. The road takes us first into a narrow canyon, then over a pass leading to an upland valley on the other side. And here we come to the village where we will be spending the night.

7.30 p.m.: Once again I've booked a charming little hotel for us. The girls even think it's prettier than the last one. There isn't a restaurant in the hotel, but a pizzeria round the corner provides everything we need.

Thursday, June 10th: Day 4

8.00 a.m.: One reason I chose this hotel is that we don't have far to travel this morning to our first location. But still it's pretty late when we set off: breakfast takes ages, because the staff apparently have loads of time. Unfortunately we don't, because today is our last day, and I'm determined to get some shooting sessions in!

11.00 a.m.: It's already late in the morning by the time we finally leave the hotel. Still, it's only a short drive to our location: just a few kilometers. Then we have to walk almost half an hour along a footpath from the car park. The path takes us over some land which was once cultivated, now overgrown fields with stones and a few very old trees. On the way we encounter a herd of goats who stare at us curiously.



After a short way we get to our destination.

11.30 a.m.: At last we reach our destination: at the place where the path crosses a small river there is an old stone bridge, traversing the water in one single large span. The solid structure is artistically constructed from old, rough-hewn rocks. Bridges like this are typical of Corsica, and there are plenty of them here – but it's unusual to find a bridge like this in such a remote area! Possibly this used to be an important transport route, although it's also possible that the bridge was also constructed because of the mill located right next to it, which has now fallen into disrepair.

12.00 p.m.: We have found a wonderful place for shooting session today, and the conditions are

just perfect: it's sunny and warm, and the girls are in a fine mood – they like this place a lot. A bit of sun on the skin is always welcome, and soon they have slipped off their clothes. The scene that develops has a classical, pastoral quality: a river, an old bridge, a few naked girls and a herd of goats scattered around.



A classical, pastoral scene soon develops, with goats and naked girls.



12.30 p.m.: While Marie looks after Melisa's make-up, I survey the area. It doesn't take me long to find a few fine spots, under the bridge and also beneath the trees a little further up by the stream. Melisa poses on the bank of the stream, in the shadows of the trees, while I have a great place in mind for Irena higher up, where the bridge forms a backdrop.

2.15 p.m.: But unfortunately it turns out that this place isn't quite as remote as I had expected: every now and then some walkers come past, and

when an entire group of them decides to make themselves comfortable at exactly the place I had in mind for the last shooting session, the time has come for us to disappear. Anyway, by now it's pretty late, and we haven't had any lunch yet. The girls have been naked or semi-naked the whole time and appear to have become accustomed to it: "Do we really have to put our tops on for the walk back?" Not as far as I'm concerned, I tell them, and I don't suppose the goats will mind, either. So I stroll back to the car with three half-naked girls in tow.

3.00 p.m.: But now we really need to find somewhere for a bite to eat; the issue has become quite urgent. There's a little supermarket in the next village, but right now they seem to be having an extended lunch break. Fortunately there is a small cafe next to it, where we should be able to get a salad or a few sandwiches. The owner is an old guy with a long beard and long hair who looks like Bhagwan. It's a pity that his sense of time is also quite Indian: it takes ages to prepare a few salads, and he manages to forget half the things we ordered.

4.30 p.m.: By the time we have eaten something and can get back on the road at last it is already late in the afternoon. This is bad news, because I really want to do some work at the second location today, and it's quite a long way from here! A narrow road with countless bends takes us over the mountains and towards the sea. It's a picturesque drive, but we definitely have our fill of it today: it takes hours to get there, and the bends in the road seem endless.



A road with endless bends takes us down to the coast.

7.00 p.m.: Evening is falling by the time we finally reach our second destination. It's an unusual and quite spectacular location: the ruins of a large silver mine from the 19th century. Fortunately at this time of the year the sun sets very late, so we should still have about an hour of usable light. The mine, which is on the coast, is a large facility; the silver ore was also processed here in industrial quantities after being mined. The mineshafts themselves are closed off, but the remaining buildings above ground are impressive enough.

8.00 p.m.: The girls are fascinated by the massive industrial ruins. Unfortunately time is pressing, the majority of the buildings are al-



It's getting late by the time we reach the last location.



ready in the shade, and the sun is sinking fast. There isn't enough time for more than two quick shooting sessions before we have to pack our things once again.

9.30 p.m.: Luckily it isn't far to the hotel where we are spending the night, and we arrive there just after nine o'clock. We are now in Calvi, an extremely pretty little town on the west coast of Corsica. Calvi is one of the tourist centers of the island, but here everything is at a pleasingly higher level. There is a small historical town center surrounding a spectacular fortress, and the yacht harbor is popular with tourists who have more money to spend than most.



There isn't much time for the last shooting. Soon we'll have to pack everything up again.

10.00 p.m.: There are plenty of restaurants and cafes down at the harbor, and we quickly find something suitable for our last evening here. The girls decide they like Calvi: they still have plenty of energy just before midnight, when I say goodnight to them and stroll back to the hotel, so they decide to hang around a while longer and explore the town by night.

We finish the day with a meal at the yacht harbor in Calvi.



Friday, June 11th: Day 5

9.30 a.m.: Today is our last day; we'll make the journey home in various stages and should arrive later this evening. First we drive back from Calvi to the airport in the town of Bastia on the other side of the island.

11.30 a.m.: We are in luck this time, and we can take a road which is much quicker than the one yesterday afternoon. After just under two hours we reach Bastia, and we have plenty of time before our flight departs to take back the rented car without any big rush.

12.00 p.m.: Trouble awaits us at the check-in: on this cut-price airline every piece of luggage for the hold has to be paid for separately. That's fine, and I took the fact into account when I booked the flight. But now we have one more piece of luggage than I paid for in advance – and it costs extra! All right, it's not that much money...

12.15 p.m.: But when I get back from paying the extra fee the circus continues: the two women at the check-in desk say I have to pay for another piece of luggage. They just don't believe me when I tell them I paid for it at the time I booked the flights. Not until we've spent five minutes debating the subject do the two of them realize they made a mistake. But they don't apologize at all for this.

1.30 p.m.: By the time we finally board the plane I've almost decided to overlook the incident: after all, you have to make allowances for stressed airport staff. But the EasyJet girls haven't forgotten their defeat and now see an opportunity to take revenge: this time my two camera bags provide them with the chance they need. Ha – a second piece of hand luggage! That costs extra!! I have no alternative but to give in. But how can people be so petty? As I fling their loot at my adversaries I resolve never to fly with EasyJet again.



The flight back really gets on my nerves: the people from the airline always seem to find an opportunity to cause trouble!

3.00 p.m.: The flight to Paris doesn't take long, and we arrive punctually. There's no need for us to spend the night here this time, because our planes to Vienna and Prague leave later this evening. Since we will be travelling separately I say goodbye to the girls here; they plan to surrender to the delights of airport shopping before their plane leaves.